

Central Intelligence Agency

25X1



Washington, D. C. 20505

31 October 1986

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Moscow's Post-Reykjavik Posture

While blaming the US position on SDI for the failure of Reykjavik to reach an arms control agreement, Gorbachev, other Soviet officials, and Soviet media commentaries have accentuated the positive aspects of the meeting, asserting that it brought the sides substantially closer on key issues and opened up new opportunities for reaching future accords. They have portrayed the meeting as the first stage of a new dialogue and have called on the United States to build upon what was achieved at Reykjavik. Gorbachev and others also have asserted that a "qualitatively new" situation has emerged and that the sides can "no longer act as they did before." This latter statement implies that US arms control positions need to be changed further, and the Soviets have made clear they regard the Soviet proposals put forward at Reykjavik as the proper basis for discussions.

- In his first national address on Reykjavik, Gorbachev on 14 October characterized the meeting as a major event that "prepared a possible step forward," adding that the work accomplished there "would not go to waste."
- In a speech at the United Nations given on the same day, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Petrovskiy described the meeting as the "most important event of international life...and a milestone in US-Soviet relations."
- The Politburo report of the meeting, published in Pravda on 15 October, asserted that "contacts and negotiations must continue...on the basis of the platform put forward by the Soviet side" and that it would be a "fatal" mistake to miss this "historic chance" to reach "cardinal solutions" on arms control issues."

25X1

The Soviets have implied that they do not regard the initial US response to their Reykjavik proposals as final. By portraying themselves as eager to follow through with the Reykjavik proposals and by calling for the United States to reconsider its response, the Soviets probably hope to encourage US

25X125X1

25X1

[redacted]

allies and domestic constituencies to bring pressure on Washington to modify its stance on SDI. They also hope to blame Washington if agreements are not realized in the course of subsequent negotiations. Their insistence that a new situation has been created probably is an effort to pocket what they perceive to have been US movement at Reykjavik on such issues as limiting long-range cruise missiles and counting bomber weapons in the aggregate weapon ceiling. [redacted]

25X1

Dampening Expectations

In his second national address on Reykjavik, given on 22 October in the wake of the mutual diplomatic explosions, Gorbachev delivered a more downbeat and rambling assessment. Appearing frustrated and at times bitter, he professed concern that some in Washington were trying to subvert the accomplishments of the Iceland talks. He openly voiced uncertainty about the course of Administration policy, asking rhetorically if it sought to "destroy everything" that could serve as a basis for progress and to thwart a "normalization" of relations. Gorbachev's lengthy presentation may have been intended primarily as a detailed explanation to his domestic audience of why his US policy was not yet showing results. [redacted]

25X1

Setting the Record Straight

The Soviets have charged that Washington has been distorting Moscow's positions. Gorbachev on 22 October claimed publicly that the US public was being told "half-truths" about Reykjavik, and Soviet officials have publicly [redacted] disputed specific US statements as to what was agreed upon.

25X1

- They have asserted that the USSR did not ask the United States to give up SDI but rather proposed that all the provisions of the ABM Treaty be fully observed. [redacted]

25X1

- They have maintained that agreement was reached to freeze short-range INF missiles at each sides' existing levels, and have denied that they had agreed to permit the United States to build up its force to current Soviet levels--an assertion they attribute to US officials. [redacted]

25X1

On 25 October, Moscow staged a press conference for Soviet and foreign journalists in which Deputy Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh scored the US "mass media of right-wing persuasion" for allegedly distorting the events of Reykjavik. Using alleged quotes from the President, Bessmertnykh claimed that the United States had agreed to eliminate all nuclear arms by the end of a ten-year period. He charged that people in Washington who did not like the

25X1

25X1

[redacted]

accords reached in Reykjavik were trying to "cast a shadow over the President." By attributing the distortions to Presidential advisers and others, the Soviets seemed to be avoiding direct criticism of the President and thus holding out the possibility of a Washington summit. [redacted]

25X1

In a press briefing in Budapest the next day, Georgiy Arbatov suggested that Moscow might make public the Soviet minutes of the Reykjavik meeting to challenge US versions of what happened there. Saying, "I think something has to be published," Arbatov then wavered by adding that "minutes are a very delicate thing because usually you don't publish them" and "that would be a violation of the rules." Unless Washington publishes a transcript of the meeting, the Soviets probably are more likely to continue making random quotes from the minutes as Bessmertnykh did rather than publish a transcript of the dialogue. [redacted]

25X1

Linkage

In his 22 October speech, Gorbachev reaffirmed that the Soviet proposals were a package. He probably intended to dispel any confusion in the Western media that had resulted from remarks made the previous week by Ambassador Karpov in London and Bonn that a separate agreement on INF was still possible. Karpov's remarks contradicted those of other Soviet envoys who were also briefing West European leaders on Reykjavik. Karpov reversed himself upon his return to Moscow by clarifying that, while separate agreements could be worked out, they would have to be considered as a "total package." [redacted]

25X1

This initial ambiguity on linkage may have been due to a desire on Moscow's part to keep its options open on this question while gauging US and European reactions. The Soviets may have calculated that maintaining complete linkage was the best way to encourage European pressure on the United States to modify its position on SDI. They may also have recognized, however, that a rigid, maximalist position could discourage the very kind of political pressure they were trying to stimulate. Eventually, the Soviets may retable an interim INF proposal based on previous Soviet positions well short of the so-called Reykjavik proposals (100/100 in Europe vice 0/0, freeze in Asia vice reduction to 100) and allow an agreement to be reached separately from the other two areas. [redacted]

25X1

SDI and the ABM Treaty

Soviet commentators have attempted to give a detailed public rebuttal of the Administration's current position on the ABM Treaty and the permissibility of SDI development and testing.

25X1

[REDACTED] 25X1

- They have argued that article V of the treaty prohibits the development, testing and deployment of all space-based ABM systems.
- They have maintained that agreed statement D of the treaty, which allows development and testing of systems using exotic technologies, applies only to fixed, ground-based ABM systems.

The Soviets are attempting to cast doubt on the credibility of the US position on SDI and generate Congressional and Allied concerns that US SDI activities are not consistent with the ABM Treaty. They may hope such a tack will help undercut Western criticism that Soviet obstinacy on SDI led to the impasse in Reykjavik. [REDACTED]

25X1

Although Soviet officials have indicated their opposition to the testing of space-based systems outside the laboratory is firm, they have suggested that their position on SDI is not well understood in the West. Soviet Foreign Ministry press spokesman Gennadiy Gerasimov acknowledged in a 21 October press conference that Soviet experts had not established a clear definition of what constituted laboratory research and testing for SDI.

[REDACTED] 25X1

- In an interview that appeared in a Hungarian newspaper on 22 October, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh allowed that the ABM Treaty permitted testing outside the laboratory of fixed, ground-based ABM systems. [REDACTED]

25X1

Summit

Gorbachev indicated in his Iceland press conference on 12 October that a US summit was still possible but said that both sides shared an "understanding" that such a meeting must be "successful" in achieving results on nuclear arms control. He made no reference to a future summit in his speech on 22 October, however and other Soviet officials have said there are no prospects for one in the immediate future, suggesting Moscow has ruled it out for this year. [REDACTED]

25X1

[REDACTED] 25X1

[REDACTED] 25X1

[REDACTED] 25X1

[REDACTED]

25X1

[REDACTED]

25X1

[REDACTED] Prior to the Reykjavik meeting, Vitaliy Zhurkin, deputy director of the Institute of the USA and Canada, said that if no summit were held in the United States in late 1986 or early 1987, there would likely be no more summit meetings for the remainder of the Reagan Administration. [REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

In any case, the Soviets probably will continue to play hard to get on the summit issue in the hope that this will provide them some leverage on arms control issues. [REDACTED]

25X1
25X1

[REDACTED]

Prospects

Moscow probably will try to keep international attention focused on Reykjavik while at the same time downplaying expectations of a breakthrough. The Soviets probably will maintain that it is up to the United States to modify its position, and their rhetoric may become increasingly bitter, claiming that the United States has retreated from Reykjavik and failed to grasp the opportunities for concluding broad agreements. [REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

25X1